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RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1573
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SUBJECT: 2010 ELECTION DATE ANNOUNCED DURING STATE OF THE REPUBLIC
SPEECH

¶1. (U) Summary. On October 1, 2009, President Ronald Venetiaan delivered the annual State of the Republic speech at the National Assembly. At this time, he made the first official announcement that the 2010 National Assembly and Resort (Local) Council elections will be on May 25, 2010. He also discussed the country's economy and strides made in the environment and education sectors before presenting the draft budget to the National Assembly. End Summary.

¶2. (U) President Ronald Venetiaan delivered the annual State of the Republic speech at the National Assembly on October 1. He immediately touched upon the current world-wide economic recession but said its impact on Suriname's economy was minor, having only affected the mining sector. The President also mentioned BHPBilliton's departure from Suriname and said that although SURALCO took over BHPBilliton's portion of their joint venture, the recession would decrease bauxite exports. (Note: SURALCO is a fully-owned subsidiary of U.S. aluminum giant, ALCOA. While Suriname's bauxite industry was negatively impacted by the recession, the increase in gold prices has balanced out the impact on the economy. End Note).

¶3. (U) The President then turned to sectors with successes during the past year. With regards to the environment, he remarked on Suriname's participation in the September 22 Summit on Climate Change in New York, and said Suriname would also attend the December COP 15 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. He also mentioned Suriname's commitment to sustainable forest management and said that Suriname had cooperated with the United States and the Netherlands in hosting the Country Led Initiative (CLI) on Financing for Sustainable Forest Management (Note: September 2008. End Note). On education, the President referred to implementation this school year of the pilot "11-Year Elementary Education System."

¶4. (U) When it came to announcing the official date for the 2010 National Assembly and Resort (Local) Council elections, the President had the audience laughing when he said that several unauthorized persons in the community had already announced specific dates for the upcoming elections. Then, he formally announced that the official date for the elections will be Tuesday, May 25, 2010.

¶5. (U) At the conclusion of his speech, President Venetiaan presented each Ministry's proposed budget for fiscal year 2010 to National Assembly Speaker Paul Somohardjo. The National Assembly will now hold debates over the budget, usually for two or three months, before passing the final 2010 budget.

